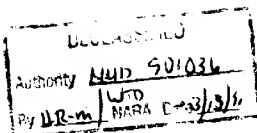


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MAY 21 1959



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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Military and Non-military Counter-measures in the Berlin Crisis

Reference: Memorandum for the National Security Council  
from the Executive Secretary, April 28, 1959

Forwarded below is a report from the group, chaired by Mr. Murphy, which was established to coordinate further planning on countermeasures in the Berlin crisis.

Since physical difficulties over access to Berlin seem likely to come as gradual harassments rather than as a sudden blockade, a study of appropriate counter-harassments has been made. The Soviet Union and GDR enjoy various advantages if the issue is limited to the Berlin area and corridor. Therefore we have studied what counter-harassments might be undertaken by the West in other world areas.

The study's main findings are:

1. US capabilities to carry out counter-harassments alone are limited and do not provide a sufficient range of appropriate retaliations.
2. Allied capabilities are considerable, particularly against Soviet bloc shipping in allied ports and possibly in the Kiel Canal and the Dardanelles.
3. Tripartite agreement on and NATO support of both the principle of counter-harassment and specific types of projected counter-harassments should be sought. Some agreement on sharing ensuing financial losses and other costs may be essential.

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4. An inter-allied operational group should be established soon.

This study will be used as a basis for initiating Tripartite counter-harassment planning as soon as possible.

/S/ DOUGLAS DILLON

Acting Secretary

S/S - RO

MAY 21 1955

A true copy of signed original

Enclosure:

Study of "Allied Counter-Harassment of  
Soviet Elec Transportation", May 15,  
1955.

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ALLIED COUNTER-HARASSMENT OF SOVIET AND GDR TRAFFIC

### Introduction

1. This paper is a preliminary study of counter-harassment measures which the allied powers might undertake in response to Soviet or GDR harassment of allied traffic to West Berlin. It is considered likely that allied access to Berlin may be faced with protracted and intensifying harassment rather than sudden total blockage. For the purposes of the study it is immaterial whether the harassment is performed by the GDR or the Soviet Union.

### Concept of Counter-Harassment

2. Counter-harassment is conceived as an action which is as nearly as possible equivalent in kind and severity to the original harassment, and which is also clearly intended to be removed when the harassment itself is ended. This equivalence is essential to avoid precipitating a rising scale of retaliations which would end in actual closure of access to Berlin. Allied counter-harassment measures would be undertaken principally to convey to the USSR that the Allied powers did possess the capacity for retaliation, and were willing to employ it in order to demonstrate their determination not to submit to a curtailment of their rights in Berlin. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that certain counter-harassments, though intended to be roughly symmetrical with the original harassment, might appear to world opinion as excessive retaliation and thus involve counter-productive political and propaganda effects.

### Soviet Reaction

3. With respect to the Soviet reaction to Allied counter-harassments,

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it could not be expected that these measures by themselves would generate sufficient pressures on the USSR to force it to back down. Moreover, the USSR and GDR have available to them a wide variety of retaliatory measures against allied access to Berlin which would permit them to up the ante regularly if they chose. The unique enclave nature of West Berlin makes Allied access more immediately and fully vulnerable to Soviet-GDR harassment than Soviet Bloc facilities or transportation elsewhere would be to Allied counter-harassment. Nonetheless, such Allied counter-harassment, particularly if carried out in conjunction with other Allied military and non-military measures, would tend to be taken as an earnest of Western intentions to resort to more serious measures should Soviet-GDR pressures on Berlin be increased.

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USBR and GDR have available to them a wide variety of means by which they can approach Allied targets in Berlin which would be more effective than any other means likely if they chose. The unique enclave nature of West Berlin makes Allied actions more immediately and fully vulnerable to Soviet-GDR harassment than Soviet Bloc facilities or transportation elsewhere would be to similar Western harassment. Nonetheless, such Allied counter-harassment, particularly if carried out in conjunction with other Allied military and non-military measures, would tend to be taken as an earnest of Western intentions to resort to more serious measures should Soviet-GDR pressures on Berlin be increased.

#### United States Capability

4. The capability of the US alone to undertake counter-harassments lies principally in the employment of naval forces on the high seas. This capability has marked limitations in its flexibility and variety of application, particularly against less serious Soviet-GDR harassments. Also employment of US naval forces on the high seas would probably involve a more obvious application of force than the harassment being countered. US actions of this kind might, therefore, tend both to alienate world opinion and to provoke the Soviet Union into a spiral of increasingly serious counter-actions. Moreover, there would be every political advantage in leaving no doubt that any counter-harassments had the solid support of all the allied countries.

#### Allied Capability

5. Most counter-harassments considered in this paper would require the cooperation

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cooperation of various U.S. allies. Allied capabilities for counter-harassment are considerable, particularly against Soviet shipping in allied ports and in the Dardanelles and the Kiel canal. In these ports and waterways a wide gamut of measures of varying intensity and seriousness is available. The direct burden of applying the counter-measures would probably be borne unequally by various NATO members. Evidence of full NATO support for these actions and possibly some multilateral agreement on both cost-sharing for the more serious measures and abstention from furnishing compensating facilities would be highly desirable, if not requisite. We should give consideration to the advisability of obtaining tripartite agreement and then NATO support on the principle of counter-harassment as soon as feasible.

#### Advance Planning

6. Both the complicated mechanics of application of most counter-measures and the necessity for speed in effecting them make it important that advance planning to develop the necessary operative capability be undertaken as soon as feasible. Therefore, consideration should also be given to the formation of a multilateral operating group which would familiarize itself with the problem and be prepared to recommend promptly specific and appropriate counter-measures and coordinate their implementation when approved.

#### List of Counter-Harassments

7. Annex A lists some possible Soviet-GDR harassments, some possible allied counter-harassments, and the Allied country or countries which could undertake them:

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a. The list of Soviet-GDR harassments is not comprehensive, as the variety of possible moves is quite wide. However, the list provides an adequate indication of the range and type of harassments to be anticipated, grouped for convenience by categories and arranged in a roughly ascending order of severity.

b. The most promising allied counter-harassments are juxtaposed to listed harassments according to their apparent similarity and appropriateness. Each counter-harassment could, of course, be used in response to other harassments, and most could probably be further refined and differentiated. Asterisks indicate those counter-harassments which appear most feasible and effective, i.e. allied capability appears greatest and there is minimal Soviet capacity to retaliate in kind.

8. The targets for counter-harassment are primarily Soviet, GDR, Czechoslovak and Polish transportation. Action against any of them might accomplish the purpose of the counter-harassment but action against the Soviet Union or the GDR would be most directly relevant to the harassment. It might be advisable to exclude Polish transportation, at least in the early stages of harassment, because of our policy of encouraging Polish independence from the USSR.

9. Legal

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#### Legal Aspects

9. The possibility of effective measures in certain places, such as the Bardenelles and the Kiel Canal, may be limited by the international status of the waterway. While it may be possible to harass lend lease ships in allied ports so as to tie up the vessels for a time, it is not likely that the vessels could be actually repossessed through court action. The legal situation would become complicated by a probable Soviet claim of sovereign immunity. Also certain measures (Annex A, paragraphs 2-5 h. and i., 8 c. and d.) would involve actions of questionable legality; hence, their employment could be justified only on other grounds.

10. While the German Federal Republic possesses substantial capabilities for counter-harassing the GDR through numerous additional measures in economic, financial or communication fields, these have not been listed because they are not similar in nature to anticipated harassments.

11. Finally, there are numerous allied measures of military preparation, which are not listed since they too are not symmetrical with the Soviet-GDR harassments considered. However, these measures, many of which might already be underway as a result of the Berlin situation, might add appreciably to the deterrent impact of the counter-harassments discussed.

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ANNEX A - POSSIBLE ALLIED COUNTER-HARASSMENTS AGAINST THE SOVIET BLOC

Soviet -GDR Harassment

1. Requiring GDR visas for allied personnel not stationed in Berlin
2. Requiring additional documentation for personnel or goods (more information; customs, currency or quarantine declarations, drivers' licenses, insurance or carnets for vehicles)

Allied Counter-Harassment

- a. Refusal of temporary travel documents to East German officials desiring to transit NATO countries
- b. Refusal of visas to non-officials of Soviet bloc countries

2. through

5. Requiring roughly comparable documentation, inspection, delay or technical requirements of Soviet bloc shipping at

- \*2. Allied ports (an average of over one Soviet bloc ship per week called at such ports as Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Bremerhaven, Copenhagen, Hamburg, London, Venice, Genoa, as many as five per week called at Rotterdam, London and Antwerp.)
- b. Dardanelles (appreciable bloc shipping)
- c. Kiel Canal (appreciable bloc shipping)
- d. Panama Canal (only three bloc ships transitted in 1959)
- e. For East German and/or bloc rail and inland waterway traffic through or to German Federal Republic

Countries Capable of Executing the Counter-Harassment

a. NATO countries

b. NATO countries

a. NATO allies

b. Turkey

c. German Federal Republic

d. United States

e. German Federal Republic

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Soviet-CPR Harassment

3. Requiring inspection of personnel or goods (vehicle or railway car inspection)

Allied Counter-Harassment

2-5 Requiring roughly comparable documentation, etc. (cont'd)

- f. For satellite overflights of German Federal Republic (Czechoslovak and Polish airlines overfly 11 and 9 round trips per week)
- g. Without interfering with Soviet bloc shipping, suggest the capability by positioning US and/or NATO naval forces near the Danish belts, the straits of Hormuz (Persian Gulf), Aden, Dardanelles.
- h. Detain and inspect Soviet Lend-lease shipping on the high seas.
- i. Detain, approach and/or inspect Soviet bloc shipping on the high seas for possible violation of Safety of Life and Sea or other maritime conventions.

Countries Capable of Executing the Counter-Harassment

- f. German Federal Republic
- g. US alone or with NATO allies. See main paper, paragraph 9.
- h. US alone See main paper, paragraph 9.
- i. US alone or with NATO allies

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Soviet-CUP Harassment

4. Delay of convoys (by above procedures or other means)
5. Imposition of new technical requirements (weight requirements for vehicles; not allowing German rail cars on military trains; not allowing mixed passenger-freight trains)
6. Imposition of tolls on the autobahn

Allied Counter-Harassment

4.
  - a. Protracted delay of ship's servicing (bunkering, lightering, provisioning, naval stores) to Soviet bloc shipping. (US and UK have bunkering facilities at most international ports)
5. k. Regulate the movement of Soviet bloc vessels in allied ports
  - a. Increased charges on bloc transport by rail and water
  - ab. Increased charges to Soviet bloc shipping for bunkering, lightering, pilotage, repairs in allied ports
  - c. Increased charges to Soviet bloc aircraft at allied airports

Countries Suspect of Executing the Counter-Harassment

4.
    - a. NATO countries, especially US, United Kingdom and the Netherlands
  5. k. ~~Regulate the movement of Soviet bloc vessels in allied ports~~
    - a. German Federal Republic
    - b. NATO countries
    - c. United Kingdom, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Turkey, Greece, and Norway
7. Harassment

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### Soviet-CFR Harassment

7. Harassment of aircraft (refusal to guarantee aircraft safety; "buzzing" or crowding corridors with Soviet aircraft; interference with navigational aids)

### Allied Counter-Harassment

Allied "buzzing" and jamming the navigational aids of Soviet bloc planes appear to be inadvisable counter-harassments. Unless carried out on a large and sustained scale, Soviet "buzzing" and jamming might be ineffective in preventing allied air access and would involve relatively high political costs to the Soviets. Also allied flights in various global areas are more vulnerable to this type harassment than are Soviet bloc flights. Furthermore, "buzzing" is particularly difficult to control and if carried out against bloc civilian planes, might endanger non-Soviet citizens.

- a. Refusal to charter shipping to Soviet bloc countries
- b. Intensify surveillance of Soviet bloc fishing fleets in North Atlantic and North Pacific
- c. Interfere with Soviet bloc shipping near various straits by deployment of US and/or NATO naval forces

### Countries Capable of Executing the Counter-Harassment

- a. NATO countries, plus Japan, France, and Liberia
- b. US alone or with NATO allies
- c. US alone or with NATO allies

8. Intermittent

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Soviet-GDR Harassment

8. Intermittent physical obstruction of ground access by passive means

9. Intermittent physical obstruction of air access by passive means

Allied Counter-Harassment

- \*a. Refusal of ship's servicing to Soviet bloc shipping
- \*b. Close allied ports to Soviet bloc shipping
- \*c. Close Kiel, Panama, Dardanelles passage to Soviet bloc shipping
- d. Repossess Soviet bloc Lend-Lease ships on the high seas
- e. Bring action to repossess Soviet bloc Lend-Lease ships in allied ports (There are 83 such ships to which the US has legal title, some of which are in allied ports during an average week)
- b. Deny landing rights in allied cities to Soviet and satellite aircraft
- a. Institute pacific blockage of Soviet bloc shipping, e.g., at the Danish belts, the straits of Hormuz, Aden and/or Gibraltar

Countries Capable of Executing the Counter-Harassment

- a. NATO countries
- b. NATO allies
- c. German Federal Republic, Turkey, and the United States. See main paper, paragraph 9.
- d. United States alone. See main paper, paragraph 9.
- e. United States and NATO allies
- b. United Kingdom, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Turkey, Greece, Norway
- c. United States alone or with NATO allies. Co-operation of Denmark, Norway, the UK particularly important

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